

MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -

Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad

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New Wasit Grain Probes Dedication on 6/22/11– The Iraqi Ministry of Trade maintains three grain storage silos in Wasit province in southeastern Iraq. Over 90 percent of the annual wheat crop is delivered to these three silos where it is stored until transfer to a mill for milling into flour for local use. Imported grains are also received at these facilities. Until recently sampling has been done by manually. This was a time consuming process that during the peak harvest months (May-July) delayed unloading and resulted in long lines of delivery trucks. To help alleviate this unloading bottleneck, Wasit PRT Ag Advisor George Stickels, based at COB Delta, Al Kut, requested CERP funds to acquire and install mechanical grain sampling probes for each of the three Wasit silos. The new Model 17 Apollo Truck Probes were manufactured by the Gamet Manufacturing Company of Saint Paul, MN.



John Ellerman Receives Certificate of Appreciation – John Ellerman, a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Agricultural Advisor receives a Certificate of Appreciation from Rod Brenes and Charles Rush during his exit interview at the US Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. John has served two tours in three PRTs, Maysan, North Baghdad, and at FOB Gerry Owens. It is expected that John will join many other good PRT Ag Advisors and travel to Afghanistan within the next few months.



Pat Broyles talks about PRTs – Pat Broyles, USDA Soil and Water Advisor for Iraq took a week of his scheduled R&R to talk to an employee association about Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) held their annual training conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma last month. Concurrent training sessions go on all week covering every aspect of government service. Pat Broyles is a past chairman of SAIGE and gave a informative talk about PRTs. Several attendees expressed interest and said they would look up PRTs on the USAJOBS website to see if it could fit into their career plans.

Personnel Update - There are currently 20 USDA personnel in Iraq including those with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), at Embassy Baghdad or embedded with U.S. military units. With this issue we say good bye to John Ellerman who did a rock solid job as Ag Advisor to PRT Baghdad.

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